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NUTRITION PROGRAM NEWS

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FOCUS ON YOUTH FITNESS

MARY M. HILL, Ed.D., NUTRITIONIST, CONSUMER AND FOOD ECONOMICS RESEARCH DIVISION

The Interagency Committee on Nutrition Education (ICNE) participated in the annual meeting of the American School Food Service Association held in Atlantic City, October 29 to November 2, 1963. This participation included an exhibit and a booth where materials of the ICNE agencies were on display and could be ordered, and a session on "Focus on Youth Fitness."

EXHIBITS

The purpose of the exhibits was to provide ideas for strengthening the educational aspect of the school lunch. Four groups of workers, who had initiated promising projects that included the lunch program, were asked to share experiences by way of an exhibit. These projects were:

- A Statewide teenage nutrition project in Georgia.
- A food habit survey of Waltham, Mass. school children.
- Community resources for nutrition education—exhibited first at the Central State College, Oklahoma.
- Nutrition activities in the Little Lake, Calif. elementary schools.

Someone associated with each project was on hand to answer questions.

FOCUS ON YOUTH FITNESS

The last session of the conference was devoted to special interest meetings, one of which was conducted by ICNE members. The chairman, Mr. Eugene Stevenson, Assistant to the Director, Nutrition Division, Food and Drug Administration, presided.

Miss Mary C. Egan, Chief, Nutrition Section, Children's Bureau, spoke for Mrs. Katherine B. Oettinger, Chief, Children's Bureau, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare who, because of illness, could not speak on "The Fitness of Children and Youth."

This presentation indicated that some are fit, but many are not. We must consider the nutritional health of our

children in the context of total health. Many health problems have a nutritional component and solutions depend on an interdisciplinary approach.

It is encouraging that something is being done about these problems. New knowledge is continually being established and programs are being developed or improved to prevent, cure, or limit these handicapping conditions. Federal legislation has provided staff and funds to further expedite progress.

In the words of Mrs. Oettinger, "These are exciting years in which we live, for new knowledge yearly—almost monthly—brings us closer to being able to make our cherished image of childhood and youth a reality."

The opening address was followed by a panel discussion. Mrs. Bertha Olsen, School Lunch Branch, Food Distribution Division, Agricultural Marketing Service, was the moderator. Each panel member described one project designed to upgrade fitness.

GEORGIA TEENAGE PROJECT

Miss Josephine Martin, Director of the Georgia School Lunch Program reported on a teenage nutrition project underway as a result of pooling community resources.

In 1962, the members of the Georgia Nutrition Council, concerned about the nutrition of teenagers, investigated methods used by the National Youthpower Congress as a possible way of promoting good food habits among Georgia youth.

It was learned that the Georgia Farm Bureau is the sponsoring agency that could send Georgia youth to the National Conference. However, it had not done so because the Farm Bureau staff has no nutritionist to provide professional leadership.

The two groups got together and formed a teenage nutrition committee to identify and seek solutions to the nutritional problems of the State's youth. The Nutrition Council provided professional leadership and the Farm Bureau provided funds and other assistance.

Teenage Nutrition Project Resulted

The first step was to demonstrate the scope of the problem and to create interest in it. Two meetings were held. The first was attended by representatives and advisers of youth organizations and the second by business and industrial leaders. An advisory committee included leaders in health, education, agriculture, nutrition, business, professional organizations, and youth groups.

Project Goals

The goals of the nutrition project follow:

1. To improve the dietary habits of teenagers.
2. To develop appreciation of the contribution that the food industry makes to our convenient and high-quality food supply.
3. To develop awareness of our dependency on agriculture in providing an adequate quantity of essential foods for health.
4. To develop awareness of opportunities for service through careers in foods and related fields.

Project Participants

Twenty youth groups were contacted—12 responded. Each was invited to send 12 delegates between the ages of 14 and 19 to a conference held in Macon.

One hundred eleven young persons and 20 adults from the youth groups attended the Macon conference. Delegates were selected to actively participate in the conference and carry the ideas presented back to their separate groups. Each organization incorporated nutrition into the existing program of work.

Program

The purposes of the conference were to create interest, to help youth identify their nutritional problems, and to motivate action toward solutions. The theme of the meeting was "Get Ready, Get Set, Go!"

The findings of a dietary study of Georgia teenagers were interpreted to show the facts about teenagers' practices. Slides and transparencies enriched the presentation and a skit by teenagers introduced "the facts." This presentation was so well received that the 4-H Club Council used it at its State Leadership Conference.

The Georgia Agricultural Commodity Commission and leaders in business and industry are financing the project. The budget for 1964 is \$4,000. A Statewide Nutrition Conference already has been held.

As a result of the Macon conference many activities were initiated and others were continued in the youth organizations.

For example, Future Homemakers of America has a Statewide nutrition project tied in with one of the national objectives—"Contributing to the joys and satisfactions of family living."

Student librarians have planned to make a concerted effort to feature sound nutrition books that will help young people to appreciate the relation of nutrition to their own health.

What Next?

Plans are being made to:

1. Conduct a survey to determine youth concerns and progress in attaining goals.
2. Prepare a fact sheet to be used by youth groups to present facts and figures on the importance of nutrition and to list sources of information available in carrying out a nutrition program.
3. Develop guidelines for judging nutrition materials and for distinguishing scientific facts from fallacies.
4. Compile a list of competent resource persons available to help youth groups.
5. Involve increasing numbers of young people in planning and participating in nutrition programs.
6. Emphasize youth's needs, benefits, and responsibilities.
7. Acquaint youth with opportunities for careers in food and related areas.

These plans will promote increases in depth as well as scope of nutrition programs. Young people can learn about food and also learn to eat a combination of foods that look good, taste good, and meet nutritional needs. The ultimate goal of the project is "nutrition facts put to work" in the daily food habits of Georgia's youth.

WALTHAM, MASS. FOOD HABIT SURVEY

Miss Mary Reasor of the New England Dairy and Food Council reported on the initiation and progress of a nutrition program for school children in Massachusetts.

Since 1961, the Massachusetts Departments of Education, Public Health, the School Lunch Office, and the Extension Service have worked with the New England Dairy and Food Council to promote desirable food practices among school children. These nutritionists and workers in allied professions recognized the need for careful preplanning and preparation before attempting to initiate activity programs in schools.

Hence, school administrators, elementary supervisors, home economics teachers, classroom teachers, school nurses, and school lunch directors were contacted, informed, and involved in the overall planning. Sound material was

gathered and adapted for use by teachers with limited backgrounds—a collaboration of the educators and the nutritionists. Finally, steps were taken to learn what the nutrition situation is among school children so that a program could be planned to meet specific needs.

Food Habits of School Children

In the fall of 1962, a survey was made of the food habits of Waltham school children. The New England Dairy and Food Council assumed leadership for the study with the cooperation of the Waltham School Department. A nutrition advisory committee from the Massachusetts Department of Education, Public Health, School Lunch Office, and Extension Service assisted. Like students in other parts of the United States, many Waltham children need to improve their food habits. Those with desirable food habits must maintain them.

More than 4,000 children in grades 4 through 9 recorded everything they ate on a typical school day. Records were evaluated and findings interpreted by nutritionists.

The study revealed that these boys and girls need more fruits and vegetables rich in vitamins A and C, more milk and dairy food, better breakfasts, fewer sweets, and more wholesome snacks. These findings will provide direction for educational programs.

Areas To Be Emphasized

Vitamin A-rich foods—The eating of dark-green and deep-yellow vegetables and fruits needs to be promoted.

Vitamin C-rich foods—Attention also needs to be given to learning to eat adequate amounts of citrus fruit and other sources of vitamin C.

Milk and dairy foods—Like school children all over the country, some Waltham boys and girls get enough milk and dairy foods, but many do not. Activities to help youngsters learn to drink and enjoy milk are needed.

Breakfast—The morning meal will need particular attention as teachers and consultants plan the educational program for Massachusetts. That attention will probably need to go beyond the school to the parents. *Everyone needs a meal in the morning*—children, parents, grandparents alike. It seems possible that parents are not setting a good example for their children because so many ate little or nothing in the morning.

Teenage girls present the greatest problem. At a time in their lives when they should be preparing for the demands that will be made on their bodies in the two decades to come, these young people have the poorest food habits, particularly breakfast habits, of all.

Snacks—According to survey nutritionists, far too many youngsters in Waltham reported concentrated sweets as snacks. Activities will be planned to acquaint these chil-

dren and their parents with snacks that provide nutrients as well as calories. Opportunities will also be provided for school children to sample and develop a taste for a wide variety of snacks. Such experiences will not exclude sweets but will be designed to prevent excess intake of foods that contribute only energy at the expense of other nutrients.

School lunch scores a victory—It was noted that junior high students rated better than elementary students in intake of vitamin A rich foods because on the day of the survey a good source of this vitamin was included on the junior high lunch menu.

The survey also showed that junior high students attending a school where school lunch was available ate considerably less concentrated sweets than students attending a school where the lunch was not available.

These findings indicate that the school lunch makes a difference in the diets of these children.

NUTRITION EDUCATION FOR TEACHERS

Mrs. Mary Alice Fisher of Central State College, Oklahoma, called attention to the fact that limited nutrition background among classroom teachers critically limits the effectiveness of nutrition education for school children. She described the efforts at Central State College to provide the nutrition information, educational approaches, and resources needed by teachers.

Mrs. Fisher and her colleagues believe that to develop any program of physical fitness, it is necessary to start with teachers competently trained in nutrition. Since specialists agree that nutrition education for children should begin in the formative years, sound information, methods, and resources should be available to college students who will become teachers and to veteran teachers in our schools. Central State College now offers such a course.

Course Objectives

- To understand the fundamentals of basic nutrition.
- To survey available nutrition literature related to the health of children.
- To learn acceptable ways to help children develop a favorable attitude toward all foods.
- To plan a series of educational experiences for use in specific school situations.

Course Content

Opportunities are provided for students to become familiar with basic nutrition through classroom lectures and outside readings.

All students are required to make a file of materials for possible use in a specific classroom situation. They must also develop from four to six acceptable bulletin

board displays. These must be developed around selected themes which are shown in detail.

Each student plans and presents before the group a unit of her choice. This project must be complete with actual materials suitable for classroom use and coordinated with the teaching in other areas of learning.

Graduate students survey classes to determine their dietary needs and prepare teaching units keyed to needs revealed by the surveys.

Summer Workshop

In summer 1963, a 1-week workshop was offered veteran teachers, school lunch personnel, administrators, public health nurses, and others. The theme was "A Forward Look in Nutrition." Purposes were:

- To present nutrition education as an aspect of the total growth development of the child—physically, emotionally, and psychologically.
- To present to in-service teachers and student teachers materials that give positive suggestions and project activities for each grade level.
- To give participants opportunities to examine the latest materials available for use in nutrition programs.
- To present the School Lunch Program as a resource in launching an effective school nutrition program.

The staff at Central State College are convinced that the School Lunch Program has a great potential for enriching the total school program—a potential that we are not even beginning to develop. We cannot make the best use of this resource until our classroom teachers have sufficient nutrition background to use it wisely.

A PLACE IN THE SUN — LITTLE LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

"The School Lunch Program must earn its 'place in the sun.' It must be more than a 'filling station' for hungry youngsters at noontime." Thus reported Mrs. Maurine Chapman of Little Lake School District, California.

The Little Lake administrators were convinced that nutrition is an important aspect of the health education of children and that the lunch program should be part of the total school program—it should not be simply a service offered for the convenience of children and parents.

First, it was necessary to convince the teachers that such

integration should take place and that it would enrich teaching in the various areas of learning.

Nutrition Institute Convinced Teachers

The many specialists involved in planning the institute included a curriculum director, four grade level curriculum supervisors, a supervisor of health services, all school nurses, the supervisor of foods services, a nutritionist from the California Dairy Advisory Board, and the Nutrition consultant from Los Angeles County Superintendent's office.

Objectives:

- To stimulate teaching nutrition in the classroom.
- To illustrate ways of using the school lunch as a teaching tool.
- To integrate the school lunch program with the overall educational plan of the school district.
- To give teachers an understanding of basic nutrition.

Teachers were shown examples of nutrition activities in classrooms, lesson plans on specific aspects of nutrition that could be used as patterns, suitable free materials that are available, and how the school lunch program could be used to enrich classroom activities.

A Type-A lunch was served at the close of the institute. Teachers left the meeting with many ideas and the assurance of consultant help.

Teacher interest increased in the School Lunch Program and interest increased in teaching nutrition throughout Little Lake School District.

The next year two institutes were planned—one for grades kindergarten-grade 4 and the other for grades 5-8.

In the 1962-63 school year a sequential program of activities was developed and presented to the teachers to test and evaluate in their classrooms.

Mrs. Chapman reported that staff from administrators to classroom teachers believe that with this plan they are building a good solid base of sound information for all school children and that they are broadening concepts of nutrition education as children progress through each grade level.